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CASA Teleconference
Focus on Patient Data
June 28, 2004 - 10:00 am

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On June 28, 2004, the California Ambulatory Surgery Association (CASA) hosted a teleconference to inform and educate Freestanding Ambulatory Surgery Clinics about the upcoming Ambulatory Surgery data collection program. Candace Diamond, Patient Data Section Manager, spoke about the history of data collection, the basis for the Health and Safety Law on Ambulatory Surgery collection of data elements, an overview of the reporting methods, important dates, and how facilities can obtain more information, support, and training from OSHPD. A question and answer session was held following the speech and is included in this document.

Q & A Session

1. What are the annual fees per encounter?

Answer. Annual fees were set in law at 50 cents per record reported.

2. The Error Tolerance Level is set at 2% of the total records. How quickly is the electronic feedback for errors?

Answer. By law OSHPD is required to provide feedback within 15 days of submission. Right now MIRCal is providing feedback within 24 hours or less depending on the number of facilities submitting at the same time. MIRCal will provide detailed edit reports that include records and all of their edit flags.

3. What is the MIRCal e-mail address?

Answer. MIRCal@oshpd.ca.gov

4. Are there any Ambulatory Surgery Centers submitting data now?

Answer. No, MIRCal is not ready yet. We are looking to begin collecting data (October 1 – December 31, 2004) late January 2005. We will begin rolling-out to facilities by issuing user ids and passwords in January 2005.   You will then be able to submit your data through the Test function to check for errors. The Test function can be used as many times as necessary. You must submit Formally by the due date of each quarter in order for your data to be "Approved" and to avoid penalties.

5. How do I know if my vendor is aware of the upcoming data collection? What vendors are currently being used?

Answer. E-mail the name and contact information of your vendor to MIRCal@oshpd.ca.gov. We can then look to see if they are on our distribution list. If not, we can add them to our list of contacts so that they will receive the latest information on the collection of AS data.

6. Will we be submitting E codes?

Answer. Yes. Facilities are required to report one (1) Principal E code and up to four (4) Other E codes.

7. What kind of data will be submitted?

Answer. The California Health and Safety Code, Section 128737 has a complete list of the data elements to be collected as does the MIRCal website.

8. Are we able to manually submit records online?

Answer. Yes. Using the Web Entry option, you may enter records individually using the fill-in form online. You will receive automatic feedback for any blank or invalid data when you "Save with Validation".

9. We do not currently collect Race and Ethnicity. Will we be penalized if we do not submit these data?

Answer. Yes. The California Health and Safety Code, Section 128737 requires facilities to collect this information.

10. Is there any information that we can share with our patients regarding the importance of collecting of Race and Ethnicity data?

Answer. Quick Notes, Issue 2 addressed the importance of collecting these data. Please feel free to share this information with your staff and patients. OSHPD's Health Information Resource Center (HIRC) has a publication available on the importance of collecting these data. Access, quality of care, and disparities by race and ethnicity are addressed in the publication.

11. Once the database is built, who are the publishing agencies who request the information and for what purpose?

Answer. HIRC releases the database to include summaries and aggregations. Look for an upcoming issue of Quick Notes to address the dissemination of data.

12. How are patient SSNs protected?

Answer. Patient data is submitted through a protected site, the locations of the Patient Data Section (PDS) staff and the data warehouse are secured, and a full-time security officer is employed with OSHPD. OSHPD meets and/or exceeds HIPAA security guidelines. SSNs are encrypted into Record Linkage Numbers (RLN). OSHPD has been collecting SSN for over 14 years with no known security breaches.

13. Is special permission required by the patient in order to collect their SSN?

Answer. Consent from the patient is not required.

14. At what age do we need to collect patient's SSN? And what if a patient refuses to provide their SSN?

Answer. The Health and Safety Code states that SSNs must be reported if they are included in the medical record. We understand that there will be occurrences when SSNs are not available (young children, foreigners, or some elderly); however, we strongly encourage facilities to ensure the collection of SSNs when possible.

15. Are there any National Requirements for the collection of data?

Answer. No. At this time, there are approximately 20-25 states that require the collection of similar patient level data.